

# IN THE WORLD OF MAKE-BELIEVE



**CURTAIN CALL**  
Julia Chandler Manz

If the lively pace set by the inaugural week of the new stock season of the Poli Theater may be taken as an indicator of the months that stretch before us, the spark of hope that was fanned to flame in the managerial breast by redecorating the playhouse and reorganizing the company was completely justified, for the S. R. O. sign has been in evidence since last Monday evening, and the close of the first week of the new stock year found no abatement in the enthusiastic reception of the aggregation of players.

There is no question of Washington's willingness to support a home of permanent stock. This was tested some four years ago when the idea was a novelty in this city. It created considerable speculation when announcement was first made that Mr. Poli would establish such an institution, but any doubt that was felt of the success of the venture was dispelled when the first Washington company under the Poli management opened the Avenue theater with "Nobody's Widow," with A. H. Van Buren and Izetta Jewel heading the cast of players, which also included Mark Kent. It was a brilliant performance, and the world and his wife immediately sat up and took notice.

Better still, the world and his wife were so tickled that they became weekly patrons of the theater, and there followed months of productions which made stock history in the United States.

Then, how did it happen that after the first year interest in the enterprise flagged?

Changes in the company and the gradual deterioration of the house that had for so long a time noosed undeviling under the Chase regime. Hand in hand these elements worked misfortune to the venture, until it came about that everybody interested became anxious.

Every sort of method for the re-stimulation of interest was resorted to but the right method, until James Thatcher had a hunch.

"You can give away seats. You can go bankrupt advertising. You can ungle your bells and foot your horns, world without end, but if you don't deliver the goods it is all a waste of energy," he argued sagely, both in reference to the theater and the company it housed last spring.

And in this belief Mr. Poli's manager got busy, with what result we had the pleasure of witnessing last Monday evening when the brilliance of the normal opening of the house was repeated.

It was a mighty wise thing—this closing of Poli's for a month or so while the playhouse was made new in the matter of furnishings and decorations.

Wiser still was the decision to organize a new company that would inspire the same sort of enthusiasm accorded the original aggregation of players, an accomplishment possible only by bringing back to Washington the leading man whose histrionic ability and distinct individualism has established for him an unparalleled popularity not only in Washington but wherever he has headed a stock organization in America.

It was the one trump card upon which a reversion to the former success of the Poli company in this city depended, and fortunately the management was able to play it.

With Mr. Van Buren's impressive personality and never-failing sincerity dignifying the dominating characterizations of the plays presented, the Poli company is once again lifted to a plane of distinction worthy the name of art.

While it is perfectly true that a stock organization depends in great measure upon the ability, strength, and finesse of its star, it would be an impossibility for one man, or one woman, to carry an aggregation of players single-handed to success.

It is for this reason that the Poli management has surrounded Mr. Van Buren with a company capable, in the main, of upholding the high standard he sets. This is particularly true in the case of Mark Kent, whose present reputation as one of the most forcible character actors in America is backed by years of constant growth in artistic merit; Russell Fillmore, the young juvenile man, whose short experience is counterbalanced by keen intelligence and a fine sense of dramatic values; Miss Kittenhouse, whose charming personality has already won for her a host of "fans"; Blanche Frederici, from whom we are going to have some fine work, if last week's distinctive characterization may be taken as a criterion, and Peggy Cameron, the vivacious little angeline, who has also proven her ability to make friends quickly.

Hope runs high in the metropolis.

Even the most pessimistic producer is wearing a smile on his face a yard long, for the new season which has had an unprecedented early opening, has thus far gone with a zip.

On the ten new plays that started the ball a-rolling last month, nine are new independent productions of as many theaters, and managers are steadily preparing new offerings with an ever-increasing faith.

The new attractions which have received the stamp of popular approval are "The Blue Paradise," "The Boomerang," "I order Fire," "The Girl Who Smiles," "Some Bala," "Rolling Stones," "Hands Up," and "The Last Laugh," while "Chin Chin," "Ziegfeld's Follies," "The Passing Show of 1915," and "The Girl from Utah" are holding tight to their original popularity.

So little old New York is hilariously happy, and everybody who has an ounce of interest in things theatrical is predicting a season of great prosperity—a swinging of the pendulum, as it were, from last year's financial straits to a general belief that folk will this season seek relief from the grave by a whole lot more to the gay.

Out of the present buzzing activity in New York there came to me last week a couple of letters that are sure to interest you.

The first was from a one-time dramatic writer of this city, and prominent member of the National Press Club, who last year was seized with the wanderlust, and blazed the trail for "Today," that nauseous melodrama in which we saw Ethel Valentine and Edmund Breese do such splendid work. On coming it was no fault of Kilbourn Gordon's that he represented a badly flattered piece, and he deserves all the more credit that he put in an entirely successful season tooting its horn.

Now he comes along with a pert letter concerning the plans of David Bispham, the Keith star liner of the current week.

Writes Mr. Gordon:

"Here comes your one-time right-blower again, and this time he is press agenting and doing the personal representative thing for David Bispham."

"Mr. Bispham is going to appear this season as Beethoven in the one-act play, 'Adelaide,' offering a concert in conjunction. It is quite a novelty—a combination of drama and song—and looks most promising. We open around the middle of October, and come into New York to the Harris Theater for a series of special matinees the latter part of that month."

"Prior to the opening of his regular season, Mr. Bispham has accepted a few weeks in vaudeville, and will be the headliner at Keith's, Washington, the week of September 6th. His vaudeville appearance, of course, has nothing to do with his Beethoven play. It has occurred to me that it would, however, be a grand idea (from my standpoint, anyway) if you should happen to see fit to interview my genial employer while he is holding forth in Washington, and I'm sure he can give you a good yarn on the Beethoven proposition."

Very "grand idea," Mr. Gordon, although it lacks the earmarks of originality.

However, I'll be delighted.

The other comes from Frank Wiltach, general representative for the Shubert Theatrical company telling me that E. H. Sothern will begin his season of modern comedy at the Belasco Theater in this city the week of September 27th, and bringing me the highly interesting news that he will be supported by Charlotte Walker, forming a combination that promises well for Alfred Suro's "The Two Virtues," in which he will appear, following his engagement here with an all-season run at the Booth Theater, New York.

It was originally planned that Margaret Dale should be Mr. Sothern's leading woman in his forthcoming venture, but she was taken suddenly ill in Atlantic City last week, and Miss Walker was speedily substituted to fill her place.



GENEVIEVE HOUGHTON  
IN  
"THE ONLY GIRL"  
—BELASCO—  
NEXT WEEK

SCENE FROM "JERRY"  
POLI'S

## THE CURRENT WEEK.

Poli's—"Jerry."

For the second week of their new season the Poli Players will be seen tomorrow in Billie Burke's comedy success, "Jerry."

"Jerry" is from the pen of Mrs. Catherine Chisholm Cushing, author of "Kitty Mackay," "Miss Annapolis," and "Sauce for the Goose." It was the first play in which Miss Burke ever appeared as an American girl, and in it she scored the greatest triumph of her career.

The play tells the story of Jerry, a breezy Western girl, who comes East with her mother, on a visit to her aunt Jerry's aunt has been engaged to a young lawyer for twenty years, and the romance between these two is waiting rapidly when the young Western girl arrives upon the scene and decides that she wants her aunt's fiance for herself. She contrives therefore, in a fascinating and original manner, to bring about an estrangement between the engaged pair, and manages to supplant her relative in the affections of the hero.

In the course of the play, however, Jerry shocks her mother to such an extent that she (Jerry) is sent to bed as punishment for her misbehavior. It is while tucked up in bed that Jerry contrives to bring about a definite proposal of marriage from the man she loves, and in the third act there is a highly amusing scene in which the little heroine, garbed in pink pajamas, proves that she is an effective pursuer and a very dangerous specimen of the female species.

In the title role, Miss Kittenhouse will have her first big opportunity with the Poli Players.

A. H. Van Buren, of course, will be seen as the hero, and other members of the Poli company will be congenially cast.

The first performance of "Jerry" will be the Monday matinee, and hereafter there will be afternoon performances every day in the week at Poli's.

Keith's—Vaudeville.

David Bispham, the famous American oratorio and opera barytone, has been secured for the present week at Keith's. It will be Mr. Bispham's first appearance here in vaudeville. He will sing at every performance this week and at the two concerts next Sunday. His repertoire contains forty operas, one hundred and fifty oratorios, several operas set to music, numerous light operas, and more than a thousand ballads and old-fashioned ballads and folk songs. From these he will draw a varied program. Mr. Bispham will be accompanied by Woodrow Rogers. Contrasting with the stellar attraction will be the supplementary star liners, Wilbur Mack and Nella Walker in their new musical episode, "An Everyday Occurrence." The rattle of bones, the tinkle of the tambourine, and the swish of soft shoe dancing will be heard during the minstrel act of the Seven Honey-boy Minstrels, late of "Honeyboy" George Evans' company. A satire on some latter day piano acts will be given by Herbert Williams and Hilda Wolfus in "Almost a Pianist." Other inclusions will be Bancroft and Brooks, William J. Kelly, Sammy Weston and Sidney Clare; the European juggler, Roberto; Bea Vera, the organ recitalist, and the Fathe pictorial.

Today's concert music is given as usual, and the bill will present the Great Rigoletto, Laura Burt, and Henry Stanford, Willa Holt Wakefield, Theodore Bendix and his symphony players, Tomers by Darrell and the other features of last week's bill.

Gaiety—"The Rosey Posey Girls."

This season Manager Petre S. Clark has determined to give the Columbia Amusement patrons a novel attraction. The performance is a two-act musical burlesque entitled "The Redemption Club" or "She Sins Again" from the pen of Walter Pearson, and tenants the Gaiety this week. Among the features will be the "Barbaric Coast Dance" of San Francisco—the real tango—by girls from the Golden West. In this will be seen Earl and Marie Gates, terpsichorean artists, "moneys" the fun makers and principals Harry Bentley, Claire Evans, Harry S. La Hay, Walter Pearson, Effie Pear-

son, Jane Pearson, Tommy Cullen, and the most popular prima donna in the circuit, Mamie Mitchell. Besides which Mr. Clark has engaged a competent cast of players to interpret the book, and has secured his usual bevy of pretty girls to assist in his chorus department. Fifteen musical numbers will be interpolated during the action of the play. Costumes, scenery and electrical effects have been carefully selected by the management. The "Spirit of 1776," the battleships in action, and Old Glory in all its electrical splendor will be seen at the end of act one. The Broadway Review will be presented during the action of the second act.

Casino—Vaudeville.

A vaudeville bill of six acts and a photoplay feature has been prepared by General Manager Louis J. Fosse as the inaugural program for the Casino Theater.

The first week's bill to be seen tomorrow at the Casino for the first time, will be headed by "The Seaside Beauties," a tabloid musical comedy that has never been seen before in Washington. There are twelve people in the company producing it and in other cities where it has been shown the playette has made a hit. The Crossman Banjo Fiddle and Tommy Van and the Ward Girls are second place on the bill. The banjo players are seven in number and are said to have an original way of presenting their entertainment, while Tommy Van and the Ward Girls are too well known to vaudeville patrons to need any description of their songs and dances. Kearny, Buckley and Cook are to present the farce, "The Butler," which was written for them. Fred Weber will show some new ventriloquist tricks, and Hanlon and Hanlon have a comedy acrobatic turn that is new.

The bill concludes with a photoplay feature.

Cosmos—Vaudeville.

"The Fascinating Flirt," book by Tommy Gray and music by George Shuler, will be presented for the first time on any stage at the Cosmos Theater this week by a company of sixteen musical comedians, featuring Arthur Geary, famous as "The Red Hussar," Bert McGarvey, a

female impersonator, Lawrence Anger and Moe Allen. A double quartet of mixed singers is one of its striking features, while an elaborate display of thirty-two costumes are said to be creations of the noted modiste Mme. Fringed.

It contains seven feature musical numbers and its scene is laid at a roadhouse near Washington. It is a Gert McHugh production. The supporting acts will include Minerva Courtney, Will Irwin and company in "A Prairie Romance," the Delesio brothers, famous Arabian acrobats and tumblers; Guy Bartlett, and the Reynolds. The added attractions will include the latest release of the Hearst-Belg news pictures and photoplay features.

A new bill of supporting numbers will be presented for the last half of the week, beginning with the matinee on Thursday.

Three dances, from German's "Henry VIII," the march and air de ballet from Massenet's "Scenes Pittoresques," Robert's "valse lente," "Cupid's Caress," selections from Donizetti's "La Favorite," Trinka's idyll, "Nodding Tulip," Wernich's "Ragtime Chimes," and Sargent's march, "Progressive," will be some of the selections included in the concert program of the orchestra at the concert today, which will also present vocal and instrumental selections by special artists, with other attractions.

Colonial Beach.

The Colonial Beach excursion season is closing with many pleasant gatherings at the resort. The summer colony is having dances and parties to mark the last days of the summer season, though many will remain at the resort to return home on the river steamers later in the month. The trips of the big steamer St. Johns close with those on Tuesday, the day after Labor Day, and large throngs are taking advantage of the opportunity to visit the spots where they had pleasant times in the last six weeks.

To give those who wish an opportunity to spend the holiday, Labor Day, at Colonial Beach, the St. Johns will make trips to the resort tomorrow and Tuesday. The schedule at arranged calls for the St. Johns leaving here this morning,

tomorrow and Tuesday at 9 a. m., so that those who could not get away yesterday can leave today or tomorrow morning and have two full days at the pretty resort. Returning, the St. Johns will leave Colonial Beach Sunday, Monday and Tuesday at 4 p. m., and will be home about 10:30 p. m.

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Curtain Rang Down on Life of Paul Armstrong Last Monday Night.

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General Manager Thatcher has purchased from Henry W. Savage the entire original production, comprising two carloads of scenery.

"Billy Watson's Reef Trust Burlesque."

"Reef Trust" Watson and his Big Girls show will provide the attraction at the Gaiety next week. Billy Watson, Frank Bombard, Billy Moehan, and Jean Leighton are the leaders of the two comedies entitled "Krausmeyer's Alley" and "The Banful Venus." Both burlesques are said to be bright and snappy, with beautiful costumes, ingeniously arranged dances, and ensembles. The plot of the two little comedies have been constructed for the purpose of laughter only. Other principals are Violet Pear, Kathryn Pearl, Annette Walker, Frankie Farrell, Grace Sachs, O. W. Braddock, and Billy Bowyer. A chorus of twenty young women will aid the cast in dispensing general merriment. The scenery, costumes and electrical effects promise a marked improvement over the usual standard set by the Billy Watson Shows. Many special features are with the production this season, and as an added attraction Billy Moehan and Violet Pearl will do a dance known as "Society."

Eugene and Willie Howard, comedians in "The Passing Show of 1915," have renewed their contract with the Winter Garden for a period of five years.

tomorrow and Tuesday at 9 a. m., so that those who could not get away yesterday can leave today or tomorrow morning and have two full days at the pretty resort. Returning, the St. Johns will leave Colonial Beach Sunday, Monday and Tuesday at 4 p. m., and will be home about 10:30